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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001069

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: MNANGAGWA SPEAKS ON SUCCESSION, PARTY TALKS, AND
MASS ACTION

REF: 02 HARARE 2127

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER KIMBERLY C. JEMISON FOR REASONS 1.5 C/
[1D](#).

SUMMARY. 1. At a meeting on May 28, 2003 Speaker of Parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa preferred to review Zimbabwe's history rather than offering much insight into party succession activities, reopening a dialogue between ZANU-PF and MDC leadership, and likely ZANU-PF reactions to the impending mass action. He did, however, suggest that party talks might resume if attention could be shifted from recognizing President Robert Mugabe as the head of state to addressing the flawed electoral process and the conclusion of the second land audit as a minimum condition for Mugabe to step down. Mnangagwa also stated that GOZ would react peacefully to MDC demonstrations. END SUMMARY.

LAND STILL AN ISSUE

[12](#). (C) The Ambassador, visiting AF/S Director Scott DeLisi, and PolOff met with Speaker of the Parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa on May 28, 2003. Mnangagwa spent well over half of the meeting reciting the history of Zimbabwe and extolling the necessity and success of the land reform program, proclaiming that, because of land redistribution, the future was bright for Zimbabwe. He did admit, as he had in an earlier meeting (See RefTel), there were some allocation problems but then maligned the first land audit saying the same people who were guilty of taking multiple farms researched and wrote it. (COMMENT: Flora Buka, Minister of State for Land Reform Program, supervised the first land audit, which was leaked to the international press. Much of her information came from the Commercial Farmers Union. Since the report, Buka has been shut out of the party inner circle. END COMMENT.) He claimed that the current "independent" audit would be a more accurate portrayal of the problem and should be completed in July.

LIMITED POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE

[13](#). (U) When asked about resuming the dialogue between MDC and ZANU-PF, Mnangagwa claimed that ZANU-PF was ready to talk at all levels but presidential. Talks at that level, however, would be contingent upon Morgan Tsvangirai recognizing Robert Mugabe as President. Mnangagwa told us soon after the presidential elections in March 2002, the Nigerians and South Africans told him that MDC Secretary General Welshman Ncube had said the MDC took issue with the process of the election, maintaining that the process was flawed and should have been brought before the Electoral Supervisory Commission. Mnangagwa said that Ncube never relayed this information to him or ZANU-PF and that such an overture might help reopen the lines of communication.

AGREES ON PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS

[14](#). (U) Regarding the mass action, Mnangagwa dismissed the war veterans, threats to break up any opposition-led demonstrations, characterizing it as a campaign tactic by Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association head, Patrick Nyaruwata. Mnangagwa maintained that it was better to have peaceful demonstrations now than for the people to have pent up frustrations, which could manifest in more violent ways. He agreed with the U.S. stance that demonstrations should be non-violent and that GOZ authorities should react peacefully.

LAND IS KEY TO SUCCESSION

[15](#). (U) When asked whether he would elaborate on the succession issue beyond what has been reported in the press, Mnangagwa maintained that he had told the truth in the press and there was nothing more to add. The Ambassador's subsequent attempts to elicit more information were not

successful. Mnangagwa would only say that the party could not have a new president until the land business was finished, thereby securing Mugabe's legacy as the champion of land reform. He claimed the second land audit was the final step.

COMMENT

16. (C) Mnangagwa's comments regarding the MDC/ZANU-PF talks suggest there may be a way to resume talks if the focus of contention moves from recognizing Mugabe as President to addressing the flawed electoral process. At a cocktail reception on May 28, Paul Themba Nyathi, MDC MP for Gwanda North and party spokesman, stated that the party's early refusal to accept Mugabe as President was ill-conceived and has made it more difficult to facilitate talks between the two parties.

17. (C) Mnangagwa's two statements that ZANU-PF could only elect a new president after the land reform has been completed and that the second land audit is the final step, combined with Mugabe's recent calls for an open dialogue on succession suggest the "Old Man" may be willing to step down. In a meeting with PolOff, Victor Chitongo, ZANU-PF MP for Murewa North who claims to speak with Politburo members regularly, also confirmed behind the scenes jockeying for leadership and the desire for Mugabe to conclude the land redistribution before he seriously considers stepping down.
END COMMENT.

SULLIVAN